Stencil Carving

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🔧 TOOLS:

- Knife (1)
- Pumpkin-carving tools (1)
- Spoon (1)
- X-Acto knife (1)

⚙ PARTS:

- Pumpkin (1)
- Tape (1)
- Candles (1)

SUMMARY

Pumpkin stencil carving is one of those projects where the results far outweigh the effort. The materials required are cheap, minimal, and easy to find. And luckily, a knack for creativity is optional because you can find dozens of varied stencils online for free.

Step 1 — Prepare the pumpkin and stencil.

- After you've chosen your pumpkin, you'll need to find or create a stencil (search for "pumpkin stencil" online. I found a couple I liked and combined them into one design, seen here). If you're making your own, just remember that all the parts that won't be carved out need to connect.

- Cut a lid in your pumpkin and gut it. If the walls are thick, use a serving spoon to scrape away some of the wall where your design will be carved.

Step 2 — Fit the stencil onto the pumpkin.

- Note where your stencil needs to curve to fit the surface. At these points, cut V-shaped notches into the stencil. Tape the design on the pumpkin, bringing the edges of the V's together so that the stencil fits snugly onto the pumpkin.

Step 3 — Copy the pattern onto the pumpkin.

- Punch pinholes around all the edges of the shapes to be cut out. Make the pinholes closely spaced where the cutouts are small and/or detailed.

Step 4 — Carve your design.

- Remove the pattern and begin carving. Carve small areas first to preserve stability of the pumpkin wall.
- Aim the carving tool straight into the pumpkin — angling it can compromise the look of your design.
- Go slowly on long cuts to avoid getting off track.

Step 5 — Let it glow.

- Stock up on candles to show off your masterpiece.

- If you don't like your design wilting along with your pumpkin, try an artificial pumpkin (try http://www.funkins.com) next year so you can admire it forever.

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